

## CLAIMS

Having thus described our invention, what we claim as new and desire to secure by Letters Patent is as follows:

1. A method of reading images, comprising the steps of:
  - decimating an image;
  - normalizing the decimated image histogram;
  - rebinning grayscale pixel data associated with the decimated image;
  - reassigning a selected range of gray scales representing a region of interest of the remapped grayscale pixel data to one while zeroing others;
  - labeling the connected pixels associated with the range of gray scales representing the region of interest;
  - joining and extending the connected pixels through region growing using a pre-selected offset value; and
  - filtering segmented regions of the connected pixels to eliminate certain candidates.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the grayscale pixel data of the decimated image is remapped from 8 bits to fewer than 8 bits.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein the image is a parcel image.
4. The method of claim 3, wherein the parcel image has a low contrast compared to a background.

1 5. The method of claim 1, wherein the filtering step includes ranking  
2 candidates for pre-sort labels or locating corners of the candidates for white  
3 labels.

1 6. A system for reading images, comprising:  
2 means for decimating an image;  
3 means for normalizing the decimated image histogram;  
4 means for rebinning grayscale pixel data associated with the  
5 decimated image;  
6 means for reassigning a selected range of grayscales representing a  
7 region of interest of the remapped grayscale pixel data to one while zeroing  
8 others;  
9 means for labeling the connected pixels associated with the range of  
10 grayscales representing the region of interest;  
11 means for joining and extending the connected pixels through region  
12 growing using a pre-selected offset value; and  
13 means for filtering segmented regions of the connected pixels to  
14 eliminate certain candidates.

1 7. The system of claim 6, wherein the grayscale pixel data of the decimated  
2 image is remapped from 8 bits to fewer than 8 bits.

1 8. The system of claim 6, the means for filtering includes means for ranking  
2 candidates for pre-sort labels or locating corners of the candidates for white  
3 labels.

1 9. A machine readable medium containing code for reading images,  
2 comprising the steps of:  
3       decimating an image;  
4       normalizing the decimated image histogram;  
5       rebinning grayscale pixel data associated with the decimated image;  
6       reassigning a selected range of grayscales representing a region of  
7 interest of the remapped grayscale pixel data to one while zeroing others;  
8       labeling the connected pixels associated with the range of grayscales  
9 representing the region of interest;  
10       joining and extending the connected pixels through region growing  
11 using a pre-selected offset value; and  
12       filtering segmented regions of the connected pixels to eliminate  
13 certain candidates.